



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), hereinafter referred to as Agency, invites comments on this information collection for which the Agency intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas P. Dickson, Acting Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 5164 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 690-4492, FAX: (202)720-4120.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that the Agency is submitting to OMB for extension.

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: Thomas P. Dickson, Acting Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 1522, Room 5164, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1522. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

Title: Public Television Station Digital Transition Grant Program.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0134.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: As part of the nation's evolution to digital television, the Federal Communications Commission had ordered all television broadcasters to initiate the broadcast of a digital television signal. Public television stations rely largely on community financial support to operate. In many rural areas the cost of the transition to digital broadcasting may exceed community resources. Since rural communities depend on public television stations for services ranging from educational course content in their schools to local news, weather, and agricultural reports, any disruption of public television broadcasting would be detrimental.

Initiating a digital broadcast requires the installation of a new antenna, transmitter or translator, and new digital program management facilities consisting of processing and storage systems. Public television stations use a combination of transmitters and translators to serve the rural public. If the public television station is to perform program origination functions, as most do, digital cameras, editing and mastering systems are required. A new studio-to-tower site communications link may be required to transport the digital broadcast signal to each transmitter and translator. The capability to broadcast some programming in a high definition television format is inherent in the digital television standard, and this can require additional facilities at the studio. These are the new components of the digital transition.

In designing the national competition for the distribution of these grant funds, priority is given to public television stations serving the areas that would be most unable to fund the digital transition without a grant. The largest sources of funding for public television stations are public membership and business contributions. In rural areas, lower population density reduces the field of membership, and rural areas have fewer businesses per capita than urban and suburban areas. Therefore, rurality is a primary predictor of the need for grant funding for a public television station's digital transition. In addition, some rural areas have per capita income levels that are lower than the national average, and public television stations covering these areas in particular are likely to have difficulty funding the digital transition. As a result, the consideration of the per capita income of a public television station's coverage area is a secondary predictor of the need for grant funding. Finally, some public television stations may face special difficulty accomplishing the transition, and a third scoring factor for station hardship will

account for conditions that make these public television stations less likely to accomplish the digital transition without a grant.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 30.

Respondents: Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimate of annual responses: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to be 30 hours annual responses.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 744 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from MaryPat Daskal, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, at (202) 720-7853. FAX: (202) 720-4120

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: May 10, 2016.

Brandon McBride
Administrator
Rural Utilities Service
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